

SENATOR MOORE: There is no cut in aid to local governments?

SENATOR DIERKS: Well, there must be a small part. Just a minute.

SENATOR MOORE: I noticed the 5 percent cut line in there, is that...

SENATOR DIERKS: Seventeen million and they're all, I guess, rather insignificant reductions.

SENATOR MOORE: Well, and the reason I wanted to bring that up is because, as I mentioned, you know, a lot of people said, well, hey, wait a second, Legislature, if you guys would quit spending money down there, why are you talking on new taxes, why can't you cut your way out of this problem? I think it's...and the only problem I have with Senator Dierks' amendment is I think it falls too heavily on just state government. If you look at your budget book, those of you that still have it, if you look on page 17, if you basically look at the percentagewise, you know, the operations portion of the state General Fund budget, six hundred twenty-three, six hundred twenty-four million dollars, that's only about 43 percent of the state budget, and, obviously, the \$40 million that comes from the Highway Trust Fund does not come out of there. The 52.7 that Senator Dierks talked about does come out of there. And so you try and balance all the cut, that's just less than half the budget because, as I've said time and time again, of our state General Fund budget, 43 percent for state operations and higher education, 13 percent is aid to individuals, like Medicaid and the other social programs, entitlement programs, and 44.4 percent is aid to local government. And so, I mean, you look at that, 43 percent is always spent...not always spent, but of that \$1.5 billion General Fund budget, you know, people are vast...they totally misunderstand what proportion of our tax dollars is spent on government in Lincoln or state government as a whole. I've given this speech time and time again as I've talked to groups on this issue, when you talk about the big three taxes in the State of Nebraska, property tax, sales tax and income taxes, for this year, statewide, we'll collect about \$2.5 billion in total of those taxes. And where that money is spent, only 680 million of it is spent on state government and higher education. All the rest of it, well, the small percent, about \$200 million of it is spent on aid to individuals which is entitlement programs...